



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 100-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 11, 2020

To: [Rep Paul Holvey](#), Chair
[Committee on House Rules](#)

Re: [HCR 204](#) – Commemorating Oregon’s 19th Amendment ratification – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is delighted to speak about the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote. We feel a strong kinship with the passions of those women who fought for the right to vote. One of the early US Suffragists, Carrie Chapman Catt, was the founder of the League of Women Voters.

In the early 1900s, women couldn’t own property, had no legal right to their earnings, and no right to vote—no power to change their situation. This was particularly true of people of color and religious minorities. The majority of Americans, both men and women, did NOT support women’s suffrage.

The 19th Amendment gave 20 million women the vote, then, to be effective, their votes had to be informed. To support new voters, the Council of Women Voters and the National American Woman Suffrage Association merged, launching the League of Women Voters of the United States. The founders called it the 'mighty political experiment.

Our Oregon Leagues have influenced practices and hundreds of policies over this time:

- We have been central to promoting Oregon’s laudable position as a national leader in our gold-standard of election practices: working on Vote by Mail since the 1980s, our MotorVoter Voter Registration, voter-verifiable paper ballots, and risk-limiting audits.
- To inform voters, in 1946, some 5,500 people met in small groups with the new League speaker’s bureau to hear balanced information on ballot measures. The League continues to offer speakers during election cycles to help citizens understand public policies.
- In 1951, the League began air pollution work.
- In 1952, the League held its first candidates’ fair, giving citizens the opportunity to meet candidates for elective offices ranging from local to U.S. Senate races. Today, the League regularly co-sponsors candidate debates and forums to give voters direct access to candidates.
- In 1970, our initiative to delay construction of a nuclear power plant on the Oregon Coast passed and the project was shelved.

The League of Women Voters is more relevant than ever. Today, 16 year-olds may join, regardless of gender. Our current study, Privacy and Cybersecurity Today, will be published shortly. We "make democracy work": promote civic education and participation, ensure free, fair and accessible elections, encourage Oregon voters to be informed and have a say in our government.

We urge your support of HCR 204. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Rebecca Gladstone
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